Restroom Watch Called Illegal

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Cop 'Spying' Protested

By DEL HOOD
The El Cajon Californian

The signs revealed what the marchers were protesting.

"Stop snooping," one said. "End Gay Oppression," another shouted. "May Co., Home of 1,000 Underpaid Cops," said another.

Some 75 members of the San Diego homosexual community, and their non-gay supporters, marched Saturday to protest San Diego police surveillance techniques used in the arrest of about 40 men on morals charges in recent months at a May Co. restroom in Mission Valley.

They were also protesting the publication of the names, ages and addresses of the men arrested in the San Diego Union and Evening Tribune and The El Cajon Californian.

The protesters contend that the surveillance method used by the police is an infringement of constitutional rights to privacy and illegal, a position supported by the San Diego chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

In an official statement, ACLU directors said: "The specter of police officers peering into restrooms and spying on all citizens therein is a repugnant waste of police officers' time and taxpayers' money. The Bill of Rights prohibits such police-state type of activities."

The ACLU statement was used to reiterate the organization's position that sexual activity between consenting adults in private should be discriminalized.

"This does not mean that homosexual or heterosexual activities in a public place would be decriminalized." the statement continued ". . . The rights to privacy and freedom of expression contained in the Bill of Rgihts entitled each citizen to express their sexuality in their own way."

The marchers circled the May Co. building twice, chanting a boycott theme, then walked about a mile to a grassy knoll near the Union-Tribune building.

Gary Rees, executive director of the Gay Center for Social Services, told the assembled group that the surveillance of the May Co. restroom by police was a violation of Section 653-N of the California Penal Code.

That section makes it a misdemeanor for any person to use a two-way mirror "permitting observation of any restroom, toilet, bathroom, washroom, shower, locker room, fitting room, motel room or hotel room."

Jess Jessop, who identified himself as a vocational nurse and a gay activist, said the gay community does not condone sex in public restrooms but resents the methods used by police to entrap those who might be engaging in those activities.

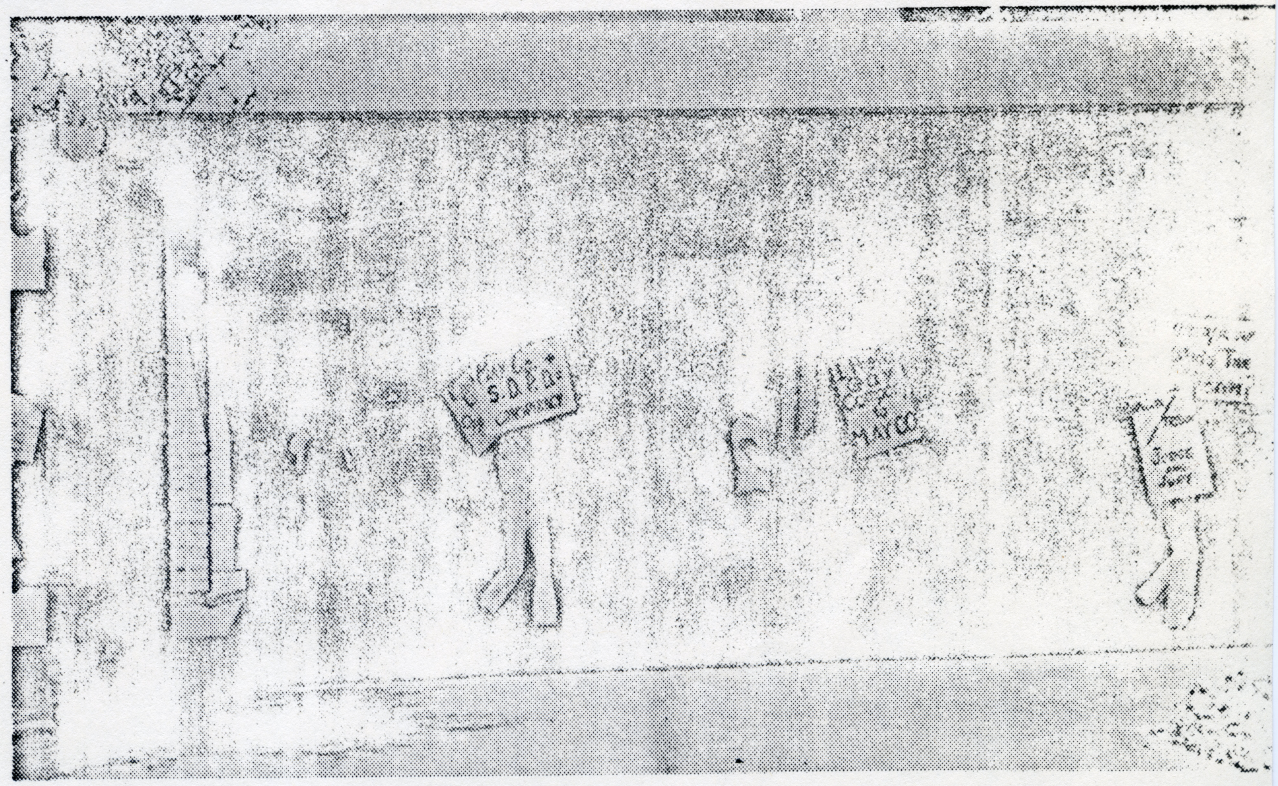
"We are standing up for those who cannot afford to stand up for themselves out of fear of losing their jobs or livelihood," Jessop said.

"Our gripe is that the police and May Co. have entered into a conspiracy to install a surveillance device that is clearly against t law."

Jessop also had har words for the newspaper including The El Caj Californian which he said "just as guilty as the Unic Tribune and makes the sar malicious invasion people's privacy by printi full names, addresses a occupations of all peop who are accused but yet u tried.

(This newspaper publis ed names and addresses those charged with mora offenses but did not disclo occupations except for tho who were most prominent

Jessop acknowledged th newspapers have a respo sibility to print the news. t he said they also have responsibility to lend " ear toward justice."



Protesters marched Saturday in Mission Valley to voice opposition to police surveillance methods used prior to the arrest of some 40 men on morals charges at a May Co. restroom. They also demonstrated against the San Diego Union and Evening Tribune and The El Cajon Califo nian for publicizing the arrests and printi names and addresses of those charged w felonies and misdemeanors. About 75 perso participated in the march. El Cajon Californian